

## Looks like candidates stuck in the mud

Amazingly, with President Bush out of the 2008 election picture, he, nonetheless, remains the target of the Democratic Party hopefuls. You would think the donkey riders would put their sights on the Republican Party's front-runners.

But no, their battle cry at this time is simply, "Beat up on the president."

A party handed the keys to Congress by the voters in the November 2006 election, certainly hasn't done anything to enhance its presence on Capitol Hill. If anything, the Democratic Party is pretty much looked upon as nothing more than an extension of the unrest and distrust that drove the elephant trainers out of the command post.

Too, the D-bunch needs to do a little revamping within. Not the least would be replacing Majority Leader Sen. Harry Reid. Comments coming from his undisciplined mouth do nothing but stir the pot. When he said, in effect a while back, that "we lost in Iraq" should have been his last comment as majority leader. How did that set with the troops?

But trash-talking — and that's all this is — seems to be his battle cry, much to the disgust of many people within his party — not just in Washington, but across the country.

The Democratic front-runners surely know the negative attitudes from Reid and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi aren't helping their cause either. All they need to do is look at what happened to the GOP last fall. It just wasn't President Bush, it was also the Republican leadership that helped bring down their tent.

It is not too early to begin taking issue with the other party's president wannabes. The way everything is going right now, however, all the candidates sound like they are stuck in the mud.

But then maybe, as long as they are stuck in it, they can't be throwing it.

—Tom Dreiling

## Helmet, bike must go together

Some memories never fade and it takes very little to bring the rawness of emotion to the surface. So it was last week when I watched a young child, probably seven or eight, tumble off her bike, onto the street pavement. When I was a child, bike helmets didn't exist, but bicycle accidents did.

My first experience with a childhood death came as the result of a bike accident. We were in third grade. I can still see his bright red hair and even then, impish grin. His parents were devoted to him, their only child at the time. They would have done anything to save his life, if only there had been children's bike helmets available.

The young girl last week was without a helmet. I never can quite figure out why a parent would risk a child's life when the life saving equipment exists. I can't buy the "he/she doesn't want to wear it...it isn't cool" and so the title, parent, goes to whom?

A few years ago another child lost his life in a bike accident. His family has launched a program to educate young children and their parents in the area about the need for helmets. A program in the elementary school as well as a bike helmet for participating youth helps.

The loss of a child is unfathomable. Even more so when the means exists to possibly prevent the death. Bike helmets exist because statistics and studies over

### Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard

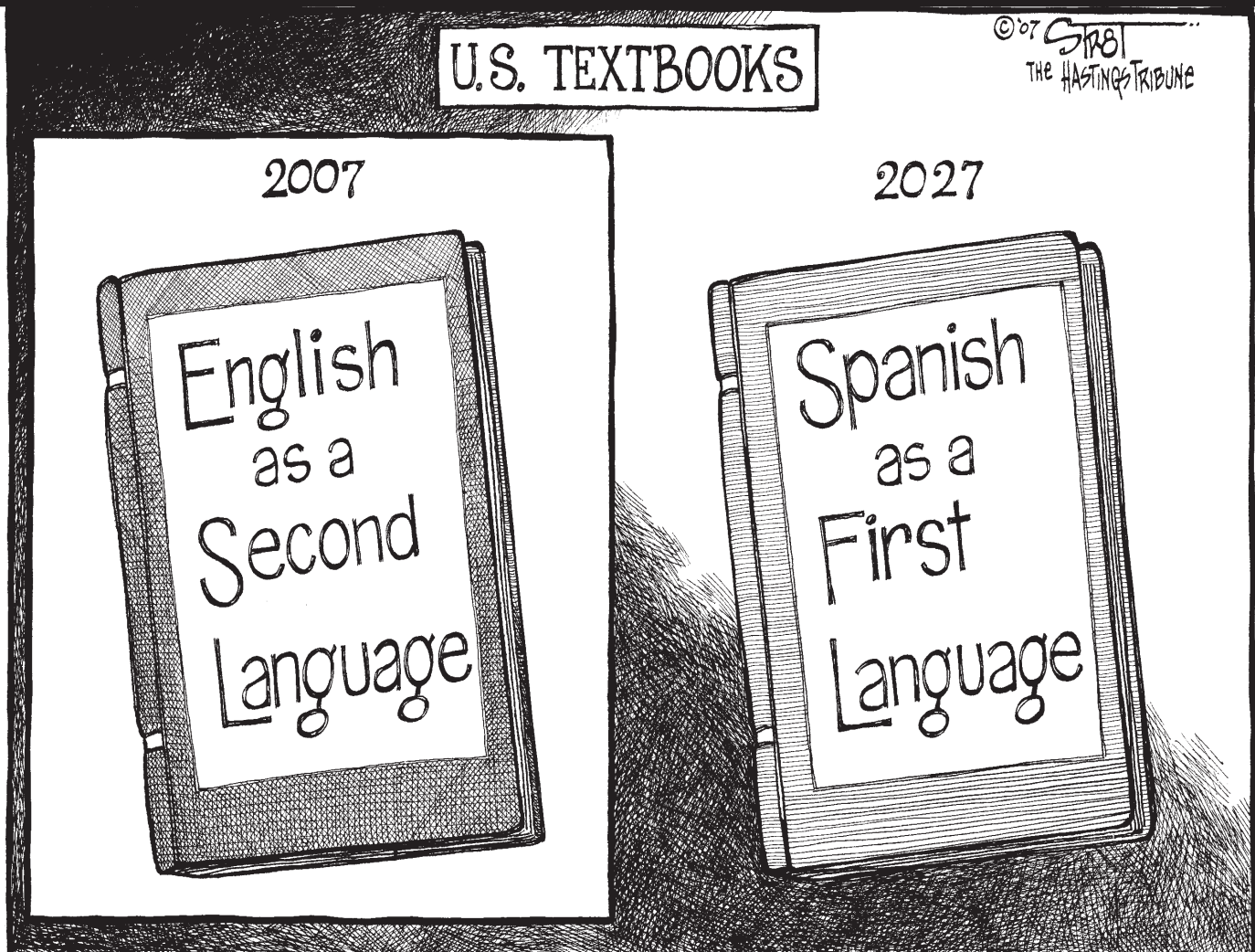


the years have proven their reliability. The same reason we require seat belts and vaccinations. Government studies have found, bicycle helmets reduce the risk of head injury by 85 percent and brain injury by as much as 88 percent.\* Even with these statistics only about 25 percent of the 27.7 million bike riding youngsters wear helmets.\*\*

Although we can't protect our child from every threat, we can work together to help keep them as safe as possible. Encourage children, neighbor or friend, to wear helmets and if you are the parent, take the parent role and insist that the helmet and the bike go together, you can't have one without the other.

\*www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/ems/Child\_Health/chmfacts.htm.

\*\*Taken from: National SAFE KIDS Campaign, the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) at the following site: www.schneiderchildrenshospital.org/peds\_html\_fixed/peds/safety/whlstats.



## Funeral was a wonderful celebration

Do you know the difference between an Italian wedding and an Italian funeral? Answer: one less person. That was the joke told by the preacher at my nephew, Kevin's, funeral. I'm not sure why, but it really struck our whole family as funny. We laughed through the tears, knowing Kevin was the one we were missing. But, what a celebration of his life the funeral was. His was a life well-lived.

We learned that Kevin had been told you can't operate a construction company using Christian principles. He said you could, and set out to prove his detractors wrong. Judging by the number of plaques and awards he received for excellence of design and performance, I would say he proved his point.

Countless friends of Kevin came to the family and remarked about what a man of integrity he was. Well, he came by it naturally. His dad, my brother, Dick, is a man

### Out Back Carolyn Plotts



of integrity and he learned it from our dad. If our father gave his word, he would have died keeping it. I don't think integrity is something you are born with — I think it is a learned trait. And, the only way to learn is by example. Kevin set a fine example, one his boys can look to as a pattern to live by.

-ob-

We have a new neighbor who moved in next door. He just came here from Florida. I told him not to get too accustomed to this unseasonably cool weather. This is not normal. Usually, by the middle of June it

has hit the 100° mark.

Wheat is starting to turn and I know farmer's thoughts are too. Turn to market prices, weather, yield, weather, hired help, weather, price of gas and, of course, weather.

Some years have seen harvest started by now. No so, this year. But, it's not far off, either.

-ob-

You will all be glad to know the baby chicks have been moved outside. There is no way you could be as glad as I am, though. It got to where I hated to go into the bathroom.

Jim made them a cute little coop and they are totally content to be outside. The added bonus is the light bulb Jim installed for warmth attracts insects and the little "cheepers" think we serve a smorgasbord every night.

Now, I know what the expression, "Like a chicken on a June bug" means.

## Newspaper was just doing its job

### Open Season Cynthia Haynes



The woman was worried and upset about an editorial printed in an area daily. The May 21 *McCook Daily Gazette's* editorial warned parents about a new drug problem. Young people, with less sense than God gave the gopher, have been using a common cold remedy to get high.

The Nebraska State Patrol was warning parents and the newspaper added its advice that people should talk to their children about the dangers of overdosing on this and other medications.

The woman thought that pharmacists should immediately move all the cold remedies behind the counter, as pseudoephedrine products are. She said she felt it was a mistake for the newspaper to have written about this subject because youngsters, especially her grandchildren, would get "ideas."

She had gone on the Internet and found out about over-the-counter medications with abuse potential. She said she believed in freedom of the press, but just didn't see why the newspaper should print this type of information.

Well..

Maybe the newspaper is the only way the youngsters get information today.

Back in my day, we learned about sex, drugs and rock and roll from other kids — not from the newspapers and rarely from our parents.

I don't think things have changed all that much, except now kids get their information and misinformation from their friends, buddies and the Internet.

The editorial named one brand name and gave the active ingredient that is the problem. The ingredient, dextromethorphan, is one of the most common in cough and cold remedies. It is in hundreds of products. To put it behind the counter and have people sign for it would cost hundreds of thousands of hours of work for drug stores and trouble for customers.

If the problem becomes widespread,

like the use of pseudoephedrine products in the manufacture of methamphetamine, that would be a small price to pay.

But, we can't keep our young people totally safe. If they want to do things that put their lives in danger, they will find ways.

There is a stupid game called car surfing. It's already killed at least one young man in northwest Kansas. Speeding and reckless driving have caused many area parents to grieve for lost children.

Should we lock the cars away?

Of course not.

Should we talk to our children about the dangers of overdosing on anything — from Pepsi to Percocet, a narcotic pain pill. Talk to them about alcohol, unprotected sex and the dangers inherent in vehicles and machinery.

We can't keep them safe. We can only pass on our knowledge and values then hope and pray they listen.

And how will we get the knowledge? I usually find it in the newspaper. I may go to the Internet for more detail, but I get my first hint of most any danger from what I read in the paper, from what is researched and written by people I know and trust to have it right (most of the time).

## Reader thanks reunion organizers, looks for brothers

To the Editor,

Please find my check enclosed for one more year's subscription.

The school reunion is just around the corner. I want to thank Sonya (Montgomery) and anyone else for all the hard work it takes to make this happen.

### LETTER

I would like to locate two brothers — William and John Harper. I think they

lived east of Norton just off 36. They were in school about 1948 or there about.

Keep up the good paper.

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